

Minutes of the Board meeting 23.4 held on Tuesday 14 May 2024

Room A203, Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

Present: Gerry Bolton (Corporation Chair), Yolanda Botham (Principal), Gary Bourton, Ishan Cader, Chris Cope, Alex Curnow, David Evans, Abby Futter, Sophie Harrison, Rob Howes, Gemma Long, Hugo Macey, Jenny O'Hare, Alex Pryce, Gavin Sheffield and Alex Wong

In attendance: Steve Dann (Vice Principal), and Charlotte Hemmins (Finance Director)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

Ref	Actions:
23.4.1	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Rob Howes, Lily-Kate McCormack, and Melissa Mlauzi.
23.4.2	Declarations of Interest The senior post holders and Clerk to the Corporation declared an interest in agenda item 10.
23.4.3	Minutes of last Board meeting The minutes of the 23.3 Board meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024 were approved with no amendments as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
23.4.4	Request for any other business None.
23.4.5	Matters arising The GSC Chair reminded the Board that her committee had last met in February, cancelling its April meeting. The next GSC report would be made at the July Board meeting.
23.4.6	Report from the Audit committee meeting AC23.2 held on Wednesday 20 March 2024 The AC Chair reported from the most recent meeting. There were no items for Board approval, and the minutes of that meeting were included in the papers as a written report. He reported that his committee had received helpful reports on GDPR and FoI. The AC meeting had discussed at some length the College's business continuity plan and the impact of some scenarios on College operations.

On the external review of governance completed earlier in the year, the AC felt that some of the learning points from the review may be useful for the Trust Board or the Long Road LGB (were the Corporation to agree to academise later in the year) as appropriate.

The Board went onto touch on risk reporting to a MAT Trust Board, including those strategic risks that would be in the gift of an Audit committee, and for LGBs the more immediate operational risks.

23.4.7 Report from Finance & Resources committee meeting FRC23.3 held on Wednesday 24 April 2024

The FRC Chair reported from the most recent meeting. At the meeting the committee had approved two policies. Two more policies were being recommending for Board approval:

Disciplinary policy. The FRC had carefully reviewed the policy that had been considerably updated in 2021 which was presented now for Corporation approval with only minor updates included.

Staff Code of Conduct. The new staff code of conduct now included relevant clauses taken from the College's harassment policy which was now being withdrawn.

The Corporation approved the Disciplinary policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

On other FRC business, the committee had received the termly HR report and an Estates and property update detailing 2 successful CIF bids. The committee also reviewed the usual management accounts, had discussed ways of deploying financial contingency, and had considered a report on factors affecting the financial forecast. A first draft of the College budget for 2024/25 was brought for FRC discussion, and the committee had further explored the future financial planning process, including how finances might look should the MAT go ahead. On risk, the committee was happy with assurances.

A Governor asked a question about the College's successful CIF bid to support safety and security onsite. The Finance Director explained in further detail the plans for a single entrance to the College, desired many years ago, but previously too expensive to allow it to go ahead. With the £1.5m of CIF funding, she reported, this would now be able to go ahead.

On the budget for 2024/25 there was a question from a Governor about contingency. Discussion touched on future costs unknown to the College at the time of the meeting, including future pay awards.

23.4.8 Report from Standards committee meeting STC23.4 held on Thursday 2 May 2024

The STC Chair reported from the most recent meeting. There were no items for Board approval.

The KA7 report received by the STC was looking promising for this year's exam series. The committee had touched on Maths and had discussed the link between student attendance and performance. The Principal had reported the results of a survey with prospective parents, and the results of parent surveys showed satisfaction with College communications overall.

The committee had considered the usual Safeguarding report and had discussed a few matters including staff turnover.

A Governor was keen to understand more about a risk (number 4.22 on defunding of AGQs) that was rated 'very high'. The senior managers reiterated that this was due to policy decisions from the current government administration, and that once the outcome of the general election was known, this risk could change. The Board pondered when that might be.

23.4.9 College development plan and KPIs

The Principal spoke to her written papers on this item, drawing out a few key points for discussion. She referred to an MP weekly newsletter about turmoil in two schools in relation to parental concerns about performance. Marketing messages to prospective students is that LRSFC is a very different environment from a school. The new Cambridge South Station should be viewed as positive in the growth strategy, and this development was being inbuilt to messages to potential students. She highlighted a couple of items on the curriculum, student numbers on the VR programme at the biomedical campus, referred to the successful and enjoyable 'Turing' visit to Singapore, and menopause awareness training that had been well attended by staff. Recent improvements to the Estate had improved the environment for students and staff and there had been positive feedback. Performance against KPIs was looking positive.

After a brief discussion about the timeframe on those courses in line for defunding and the College approach around this, this item was closed.

23.4.10 Strategic report verbal

The Principal opened with an update on the MAT project.

Ref**Actions:**

The full Board had received detailed reports and a presentation from each of the due diligence (financial and legal) providers at its meeting on 8 May. This had raised much discussion and many questions amongst Corporation members but no 'red flags' were articulated by the providers. Tupe consultation with College staff, as part of the public consultation, was due to end 17 May. The draft Trust Scheme of Delegation continued in development jointly with Colchester; this would set out the 'must dos' for the new organisation at all levels.

In response to a question from a Governor about public consultation, the Principal advised that all feedback, responses 'for', 'against' and 'neutral' would be shared in an anonymised format after the end of consultation, with a summary published by 4 July 2024. The responses to the public consultation should give a snapshot of awareness in the community but the Board noted that the Secretary of State had already approved the MAT application with the issuing of the Academy Orders on 29 February 2024.

A Governor asked if it would be possible for the report detailing the legal due diligence carried out on Long Road to be shared. Governors noted that the financial due diligence reports already covered both Long Road and Colchester. Reiterating that the due diligence work to date had not exposed any barriers to the academisation project moving forward, the work on legal due diligence would likely continue up until the Board needed to make its final decision (25 June 2024).

Clerk

A few of the next steps in the MAT project were outlined:

- The AWG would be meeting again before the 25 June Board meeting
- The Articles of Association, showing the MAT's 5 members and staff and student members on LGBs, would go forward for DfE clearance
- The master and supplemental funding agreements (prescribed documents) would have to be signed
- The DfE checklist for academisation also covered other matters such as insurance, contracts, new bank accounts, liaison with the ICO and with exam boards.

The Corporation noted that the major changes would be at governance level, with a new Trust Board and with two new local governing bodies (LGBs). A schedule of meeting dates for the new Trust at all levels would be drafted in due course. The two College Corporations would be making the formal decision on academisation on 24 June (Colchester), and 25 June (Long Road).

Ref**Actions:****23.4.11 Any other business**

None.

23.4.12 Date of next meeting

The Chair reminded the Board of the upcoming meetings, *23.4 Tuesday 25 June 2024* and *23.5 Tuesday 16 July 2024*. The main meeting finished at 6.22pm and the senior managers, including the Clerk, left the meeting.